

Eastern Market Historic District

General boundaries: Gratiot Avenue, Riopelle Street, and Rivard Street.

Local		
State	✓	7/26/74
State Marker		
National	✓	11/29/78



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Photograph by Amy Hecker, courtesy of National Park Service

Historic overview:

The Eastern Market Historic District is located on land that was originally a major city cemetery, in the area of one of Detroit's early ethnic neighborhoods. The architecture of the district ranges from late Victorian of the 1880s and 1890s to early 1920s commercial. The Eastern Farmer's Market is the last of the three markets that have served the city of Detroit. In 1880s a Central Market was erected on Cadillac Square in the heart of the central business district. Land values and crowded conditions were making the area unsuitable as a location for the produce market, hence the decision to establish two new markets, on the east and west sides of town. The Central Market was demolished in 1889, and the Western market in the early 1960s as part of the construction for the Fisher Freeway.

By 1855 City Cemetery land was becoming too valuable for cemetery use. Additionally, the mayor stated that the condition of the cemetery was a disgrace to city authorities. New uses began to emerge in the area, and bodies began to be removed in 1869. The first use of the land for a market was the establishment of a hay and wood market in 1870. The current Shed #2 was completed in 1898, and Shed #3 in 1922.

This area also developed as one of Detroit's first ethnic neighborhoods. Germans came to Detroit in the 1830s, and by 1850 they comprised over 10% of the population. Much of the district was originally mixed residential and commercial, with shop owners living above their businesses. Residential use is now rare, and commercial buildings, warehouses and market sheds predominate. Today the market is actively utilized, as local farmers sell their produce at wholesale during the week and retail on Saturdays.

